

Factors to consider when making decisions after receiving information about abuse

Summary	2
The government's safeguarding principles	2
1. What are the government's safeguarding principles?	2
Safeguarding alerts and safeguarding concerns	2
2. What is the difference between a safeguarding alert and a safeguarding concern?	2
Making decisions	3
3. What factors should compliance inspectors consider when they first receive information about abuse?	3
4. What factors should compliance inspectors take into account about the person using the service?	3
5. What factors should compliance inspectors take into account about the alleged incident or event?	3
6. What factors should compliance inspectors take into account about the location and provider?	4
Next steps	4
7. What are the immediate next steps after deciding whether information is an alert or concern?	4
Tools for the job	4

Summary

This guidance describes the factors that compliance inspectors should take into account when making decisions about safeguarding information. You can use it when you receive relevant information about regulated services and refer to the government's safeguarding principles.

The government's safeguarding principles

1. What are the government's safeguarding principles?

The government has recently endorsed the following set of principles to use when undertaking safeguarding work. Compliance inspectors and managers should always take these principles into account when making decisions.

Empowerment – What does the person want? What rights need to be respected? Are there duties to act – are others at risk of harm?

Protection – Is this person a 'vulnerable adult'? What support do they need? Is capacity an issue? Should others such as a carer be involved?

Proportionality – Have risks been weighed up? Does the nature of the concern require referral through multi-agency procedures?

Partnership – What is the view of others involved? How do multi-agency procedures apply?

Accountability – Is the decision well made? Is it defensible?

Safeguarding alerts and safeguarding concerns

2. What is the difference between a safeguarding alert and a safeguarding concern?

To respond to information about abuse, you need to decide whether it is a safeguarding alert or a concern.

Safeguarding alerts

Information is an alert when:

- CQC is the first statutory agency to receive the information about actual or alleged abuse, and/or
 - CQC will or may need to take immediate regulatory action as a result of the information.
-

Safeguarding concerns

Information is treated as a safeguarding concern when:

- CQC is not the first statutory agency to receive the information, and
 - There is no need for CQC to take immediate regulatory action.
-

Making decisions

3. What factors should I consider when I first receive information about abuse?

- What is happening, has happened, or is alleged to be happening or have happened?
 - Did any person experience, or were they put at risk of harm?
 - Are any other people at risk of harm?
 - Has medical attention been sought?
 - Is the alleged victim/s safe now?
 - Does any other statutory agency know about the incident or event? Are they acting on the information if they do know about it?
-

4. What factors should I take into account about the person using the service?

- What are the person's wishes about how the information should be dealt with?
 - Does the person lack capacity to make decisions relevant to the information and their own safety and wellbeing?
 - Can the person advocate for themselves?
-

5. What factors should I take into account about the alleged incident or event?

- What is the actual or potential nature and impact on the person of the actual or possible harm?
 - Might other agencies have information that could affect our judgement about the impact and likelihood of harm, or the wishes of the person where this is not known?
 - If the likelihood and/or impact of harm is low, are there other concerns that taken together suggest the person is or may be at higher risk of avoidable unnecessary harm?
 - Is there suspicion or evidence of negligence, incompetence or recklessness?
 - Is it likely to be a police matter?
-

6. What factors should I take into account about the location and provider?

- Are there themes and trends – is this a recurring pattern for the location and/or provider?
 - What other relevant information do we already have about the location and/or provider (for example, other concerns, existing or other safeguarding concerns, notifications, previous or ongoing enforcement action)?
 - What is the provider's capacity to respond appropriately?
-

Next steps

7. What are the immediate next steps after deciding whether information is an alert or a concern?

- Have you recorded your decision whether to refer the information as an alert to the relevant local safeguarding authority and/or police force, together with the reasons, in CRM?
 - Should any information be captured in 'Share Your Knowledge'?
 - Does the immediate action taken adequately ensure the relevant person or people's safety and welfare?
 - Do you need to begin any regulatory processes?
-

Tools for the job

[CQC's safeguarding protocol](#)

[The full CQC safeguarding guidance](#)

[CRM safeguarding guidance](#)

[Outcome request letter](#)

[Outcome request letter \(dragon\)](#)

[Briefing: Adult safeguarding in the NHS](#)
